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Family Involvement and Helping Behavior in Teams

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Helping behavior at work has become increasingly important, with organizations making more and more use of cooperative work practices. The difficulty is that employees are facing growing demands beyond the workplace. This study investigates the mechanisms by which family involvement (family structure, family tasks, family support) affects helping behavior in teams. Based on a sample of 495 team members, the results show that having a supportive partner and performing care tasks increase helping behavior via enhanced fulfillment and skills. Having young children is directly and negatively related to helping behavior. The authors also conducted separate analyses for men and women.

Keywords: *helping behavior; cooperation; family demands; work–family balance; teamwork*

Relationships between team members have become more important now that organizations increasingly use cooperative work processes (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). A team-based approach is seen as the crucial ingredient of postbureaucratic organizations and the key to efficiency and competitiveness in the global economy (Hodson, 1997). Team-embedded positions require employees to have excellent social, communicative, and cooperative skills on top of their job skills, knowledge, and experience. Research has shown the beneficial impact of cooperative interaction for both team members and organizations (for an overview, see Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008; Stewart & Barrick, 2000). This critical employee

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behavior—helping other team members—is the focus of this article. We define helping behavior as the voluntary social, assisting, and cooperative behavior displayed by an employee and directed toward team members (Anderson & Williams, 1996; Hechter, 1987). Helping behavior is a subdimension of organizational citizenship behavior, referring to individual behavior that is discretionary, that is not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that, in the aggregate, promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). Others have used conceptually similar constructs, such as helping interactions (Burke, Weir, & Duncan, 1976), altruism (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000), horizontal coworker relations (Hodson, 2001), solidarity (Hechter, 1987), and prosocial behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986).

Previous studies have explained helping behavior mainly in terms of work factors, such as job autonomy, work demands, and group cohesion (Anderson & Williams, 1996; Ng & Van Dyne, 2005). However, we argue that circumstances outside the work domain might prevent team members from meeting the required level of cooperative behavior at work. In the past few decades, the growing number of women in the workforce, the rise in single-parent families, and the growing number of dual-earner households have increased the likelihood that employees occupy both a family and a work role (Allen, Herst, Burck, & Sutton, 2000). The combination of work and family roles often leads to conflict, time pressure, and stress (for an overview, see Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). Work–family research has shown that family demands affect work outcomes such as burnout (ten Brummelhuis, van der Lippe, Kluwer, & Flap, 2008) and absenteeism (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002). Family demands may have stronger effects on helping behavior than on other work outcomes because helping behavior is a type of extrarole performance, a preferred additional task above and beyond the employee's primary prescribed work tasks (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004). It is more likely that employees under time pressure will reduce their investment in extrarole behavior than in behavior required by their job because extrarole behavior is not obligatory. The question addressed in this study, then, is whether team members' family involvement affects their helping behavior at work. Family involvement refers to family structure (presence of partner and children), family tasks (time spent on household chores and child care), and family support (help with family tasks). We thus contribute to previous studies on helping behavior by investigating the family domain as an explanatory factor. Furthermore, we elaborate on previous work–family studies in two different ways.

First, authors have argued that family involvement does not need to conflict with work, but can also enrich work outcomes (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006). Some aspects of family life, such as having a partner, can reduce feelings of stress, whereas other family aspects, such as caring for young children, can negatively affect work outcomes (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008). Suggested mechanisms through which family life affects work outcomes are, for example, fulfillment (enrichment) and time pressure (depletion; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). There are, as yet, no empirical studies testing these mechanisms (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). We therefore examine whether the relationship between family involvement and helping behavior is mediated by depleting mechanisms (time pressure, energy drain) and/or enriching mechanisms (family skills, fulfillment).

Second, work–family studies commonly take possible gender differences into account, which may result from traditional gender-role norms whereby women are expected to take

care of the household and men to be breadwinners (Pleck, 1977; Voydanoff, 2002). Women are thought to experience stronger spillover effects from the family domain to work because, unlike men, they regard the family role as more important than the work role (Voydanoff, 2002). Nowadays, however, the number of dual-earner families is growing, and more modern gender-role norms prevail (Cinamon & Rich, 2002), bridging differences between men and women in work and family role preferences. We therefore explore whether gender differences in the family–work linkage have persisted, in particular in the relationship between family involvement and helping behavior.

In summary, the present study extends previous research by investigating whether employees' family involvement is positively or negatively related to helping behavior at work and by specifying underlying depleting and enriching mechanisms. We also examine gender differences. We focus on helping behavior between team members because in a team-based work setting such behavior is crucial for the team's work outcomes (Mathieu et al., 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Work Antecedents of Helping Behavior in Teams

Before clarifying how family characteristics affect helping behavior at work, we provide a brief review of the literature on the work characteristics that predict helping behavior in teams. These work antecedents can be categorized into organizational characteristics, leadership characteristics, team characteristics, and task characteristics (Ng & Van Dyne, 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Examples of *organizational characteristics* are the reward system and organizational support. Perceived organizational support and more objective forms of performance assessment for reward distribution have been reported to positively affect helping behavior (Lee, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Also, several *leadership qualities*, such as intellectual stimulation, social support, and high performance expectations, are found to increase helping behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000). *Team characteristics* that improve members' helping behavior are team cohesion and cooperative group norms, whereas task conflicts reduce helping behavior (Hechter, 1987; Ng & Van Dyne, 2005). Furthermore, the opportunity to get together with coworkers is an important prerequisite for helping colleagues (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). For instance, smaller teams and frequent meetings at work increase employee helping behavior (Flap & Völker, 2004). Task dependency and satisfying tasks are important *task characteristics* that affect helping behavior. Previous research indicates that team members show more helping behavior when they need one another to complete their tasks (Flap & Völker, 2004; Koster, Stokman, Hodson, & Sanders, 2007) and when they perform nonroutine, autonomous tasks (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Family–Work Linkage

Previous research points to the interrelatedness of the family and work domains, with family factors spilling over to work and vice versa (Eby et al., 2005). It is therefore likely

that factors beyond the workplace influence helping behavior at work, in addition to work factors. The relationship between family involvement and work outcomes is generally explained by the *conflict approach*, which assumes that time and energy are limited resources (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). The conflict approach is based on assumptions of more general resource theories that aim to explain stress, such as the conservation of resource (COR) model (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002) and the job–demands–resource (JDR) model (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). The key assumption of the COR model is that people attempt to obtain, retain, and protect resources—such as self-esteem, socioeconomic status, time, and energy—and that stress occurs when they risk losing or actually do lose such resources (Hobfoll, 2002). The JDR model focuses on work stress and proposes that employees specifically risk depleting their resources when job demands are heavy and the means to cope with these demands are weak (e.g., supervisor support). This increases stress and deteriorates work outcomes (Bakker et al., 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001). The conflict approach uses these insights to explain spillover effects between the work and the family domains. Assuming that employees have limited resources, the time and energy they spend on the family will reduce the time and energy left over for their work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Goode, 1960). This implies that heavy family responsibilities drain the employees' resources (e.g., time and energy) or at least place them at risk. When resources are depleted and employees are overburdened by work and family tasks, burnout and role strain result (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008). Overburdened employees consequently have less time and energy to help colleagues at work. According to conflict theory, then, family demands will have negative consequences for employees' helping behavior because of time pressure and energy drain.

A growing number of authors argue that the conceptualization of work and family as time- and energy-consuming entities is too simplistic (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne et al., 2006). Family life can also act as a resource, as posited by the *enrichment approach* to the family–work linkage (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hill, 2005; Voydanoff, 2002). The enrichment approach builds on role accumulation theories (Marks, 1977) and the COR model (Hobfoll, 2002), the assumption being that resources can generate new resources. Hobfoll (2002) describes how resources appear to come in bundles. Individuals who possess resources are better equipped to handle stressful circumstances, which in turn increases self-esteem. Furthermore, those individuals are more likely to avoid problematic situations, allowing them to invest in further resources instead of in preventing resource loss. In addition, individuals with more resources are less negatively affected when they face resource drain, as they have substitute resources.

The enrichment approach specifies how several aspects of family life can act as a resource. Family life may offer fulfillment, respect, and energy that can be reinvested in work (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For instance, spending time with children may enable employees to put work problems into perspective, reducing feelings of stress. In line with this idea, Graves, Ohlott, and Ruderman (2007) found that commitment to the parenting role enhanced life satisfaction as well as work performance. Family involvement may also help employees develop skills and gain experience and knowledge that they can then use at work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2006). Managing the household may result in skills such as multitasking and scheduling. In a study on managerial women, interpersonal skills, problem solving, and scheduling

were mentioned as family-derived skills that fostered their professional roles (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002). Fulfillment and skills derived from family life can facilitate more helpful behavior at work. Recapitulating, although the conflict approach suggests that family life reduces work outcomes by depleting employees' resources such as time and energy, the enrichment approach suggests that family life can be beneficial for work outcomes because it gives employees more resources, such as skills and fulfillment.

A growing number of studies indicate that family life can indeed enrich work outcomes or that enrichment can at least coexist with work–family conflict (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006). For example, Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, and Mooijaart (2009) found that time spent on household chores increased family–work conflict, whereas support from family and friends was associated with more positive spillover from family to work. What we do not yet know is whether a single family aspect induces either depleting or enriching processes or whether it can elicit both processes. The organizational literature commonly perceives resource depletion and resource accumulation as two separate processes: Although job demands exhaust an employee's resources and cause work outcomes to deteriorate, job resources replenish the employee's resources and improve work outcomes (Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker & Geurts, 2004). Such a clear distinction between enrichment and depletion is less obvious in the family–work literature. For example, it is possible that having children partially conflicts with work outcomes as caring for children costs time, whereas it also offers enrichment because caring for children is fulfilling (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008). In line with this view, we examine both the conflict and enrichment approaches. We explicitly test to what extent several family characteristics induce both depleting mechanisms (time pressure, energy drain) and enriching mechanisms (fulfillment, family skills). The resulting level of helping behavior, as formulated in the hypotheses, depends on whether we expect depleting or enriching processes to prevail.

The Family in Detail

To depict the employee's family life in detail, we follow a commonly used categorization, distinguishing among the employee's family structure, family tasks, and family support, together labeled family involvement (Erickson, Nichols, & Ritter, 2000; ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008; Voydanoff, 1988). *Family structure* refers to the presence of a partner, the number of children, and the children's ages. In the main, having a family (partner and children) appears to contribute to an employee's resources. A partner can advise on work-related matters, contribute to greater well-being, and lower work–family conflict levels (Bernasco, de Graaf, & Ultee, 1998; Hill, 2005). Having children has been associated with fewer feelings of burnout and improved interpersonal skills, life satisfaction, and performance (Graves et al., 2007; Ruderman et al., 2002; ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008). In contrast, previous studies have indicated that having preschool children is associated with higher levels of employee burnout, time pressure, absenteeism, and work–family conflict (Erickson et al., 2000; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001; ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008; van der Lippe, 2007). These studies suggest that having a partner induces enriching processes and even reduces depleting processes such as energy drain. Having children mainly induces enriching

processes and brings about depleting processes to a lesser extent. The balance is the other way around when children are young, inducing more depletion than enrichment. Consequently, having a partner and children will increase helping behavior, unlike having younger children. Note that each hypothesis consists of three parts, being (a) the overall relationship between the family factor and helping behavior depending on the prevalence of the enriching or the depleting effects, (b) an effect of the relevant family factor on helping behavior through the enriching mechanisms, and (c) an effect of the family factor on helping behavior through the depleting mechanisms.

Hypothesis 1: Having a partner is positively related to helping behavior through increased fulfillment and skills and reduced time pressure and energy drain.

Hypothesis 2: Having children is positively related to helping behavior, as the increase in fulfillment and skills outweighs the increase in time pressure and energy drain.

Hypothesis 3: Having young children is negatively related to helping behavior, as the increase in time pressure and energy drain outweighs the increase in fulfillment and skills.

In addition to family structure, family involvement includes the hours that the employee spends on *family tasks*. The employee can develop skills (e.g., multitasking and patience) by caring for others, coordinating the household, and other such tasks (Ruderman et al., 2002). Such skills are also helpful when cooperating with peers at work. Previous studies have reported that some types of family tasks will be more depleting than others. ten Brummelhuis et al. (2008) found increased burnout among employees with more demanding household chores, whereas care tasks were not significantly related to burnout. Studies exploring family task preferences also show that household chores such as cleaning and laundry rank relatively low on the pleasantness scale (Poortman & van der Lippe, in press; Van Berkel & de Graaf, 1998). These results suggest that household chores are more likely to be energy draining than enriching. We therefore hypothesize that time spent on household chores will mainly deplete the employee's time and energy and in turn negatively affect helping behavior at work. Family tasks that involve caring for children and other family members are more likely to produce additional resources, as these tasks are more fulfilling. They enable employees to put work-related problems into perspective, and the interaction with family members may result in better social skills that can be used at work as well (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). We expect that if there are any costs associated with care tasks in terms of time and energy, they will be lower than the benefits of the enriching processes, resulting in increased helping behavior.

Hypothesis 4: Care tasks are positively related to helping behavior, as the increase in fulfillment and skills outweighs the increase in time pressure and energy drain.

Hypothesis 5: Household chores are negatively related to helping behavior, as the increase in time pressure and energy drain outweighs the increase in fulfillment and skills.

Family support is the final category of family involvement. The spouse has been considered the primary source of support in the family domain (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999). The partner's emotional support, such as love and understanding, has been found to contribute to employee well-being (Van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders, 2006). The partner may also perform

some of the household tasks, thereby reducing the employee's family burden (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Hill, 2005). Furthermore, the partner may give work-related advice and help the employee develop skills, improving the latter's work outcomes (Bernasco et al., 1998; Ruderman et al., 2002). In contrast, less rewarding relationships presumably do not increase fulfillment. For example, conflict between partners increases stress, time pressure, and work–family conflict, whereas it reduces positive interactions, such as giving advice and love (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Kluwer & Johnson, 2007). Relationships in which support is weak and conflicts are frequent lead to more resource depletion than enrichment. We therefore examine several partner characteristics, including the partner's help with family tasks and conflicts with the partner.

Hypothesis 6: The partner's assistance with family tasks is positively related to helping behavior through increased fulfillment and skills and reduced time pressure and energy drain.

Hypothesis 7: Conflict with the partner is negatively related to helping behavior through increased time pressure and energy drain and reduced fulfillment and skills.

Finally, team members may also receive help with family tasks from others, such as family members, friends, or a paid third party. Outsourcing family tasks can save the employee time and energy, and we therefore expect that outsourcing household chores and child care will reduce depleting processes. Previous studies confirm that outsourcing of child care diminishes work–family conflict and stress, whereas it contributes to employee morale (for an overview, see Glass & Finley, 2002). At the same time, the fulfillment and skills derived from performing those tasks may also be diminished. Outsourcing of child care, for example, can disrupt the work–family balance, as parents are less involved in family chores (Elliott, 2003). In line with the arguments above, we expect that outsourcing of household chores will increase helping behavior because it strongly reduces time pressure and energy drain. We expect that the reduction in enriching processes will be marginal, as performing household chores do not add much to fulfillment and skills in the first place. Outsourcing of care tasks will presumably reduce depleting processes but—because such tasks are more likely to produce fulfillment and skills—also enriching processes, resulting in less helping behavior.

Hypothesis 8: Outsourcing of care tasks is negatively related to helping behavior, as the decrease in fulfillment and skills outweighs the reduction in time pressure and energy drain.

Hypothesis 9: Outsourcing of household chores is positively related to helping behavior, as the reduction in time pressure and energy drain outweighs the decrease in fulfillment and skills.

Gender Differences

Most work–family research takes possible gender differences into account (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The *sex-role theory* is commonly used to explain gender differences in the relationship between family and work (Pleck, 1977; Voydanoff, 2002). This theory predicts that the family will have stronger effects on the work outcomes of women than of men, as socially embedded norms concerning gender role division hold women primarily responsible for family roles, such as being a parent. Moreover, women regard the family role as more important than the work role (Voydanoff, 2002). As a result, women use a more synergistic

mental model of the work–family interface when they participate in paid work, allowing for more spillover between the work and family domains (Andrews & Bailyn, 1993). Men are supposedly better able to separate family influences from the work domain because they feel primarily responsible for the work role.

So far, empirical findings have not provided convincing evidence of gender differences in the work–family linkage (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Eby et al., 2005). In some studies, women were found to experience more family–work interference because of family demands than were men (Dilworth, 2004; Keene & Reynolds, 2005; Loscocco, 1997). Also, women were more likely to report feelings of stress, reduced work–life balance, and negative effects on their career opportunities than were men (Lundberg & Frankenhaeuser, 1999). More feelings of work-related burnout have been reported among women when they performed more household chores, whereas this relationship was not present among men (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008). Other studies did not show notable gender differences in, for example, the effects of family role salience on family–work conflict and the permeability of work and family domains (Eagle, Miles & Icenogle, 1997; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992). Moreover, some studies have reported that family factors, such as conflicts at home, were more likely to predict work–family conflict among men than among women (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Loerch, Russell, & Rush, 1989).

In response to these mixed results, several authors have argued that gender differences are less likely nowadays because modern gender role norms stressing an egalitarian role division are becoming increasingly common (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Voydanoff, 2002). The more equal division of work and family roles between men and women blurs the previously clear-cut gendered role preferences, reducing the likelihood of gender differences in the effects of family characteristics on work outcomes. In the Netherlands, where this study was conducted, 60% of the adult population think that men and women should divide paid work equally, more than 75% are of the opinion that household chores should be shared equally, and more than 90% think that men and women are equally responsible for child care (SCP, 2006). However, women are still responsible for the bulk of the family tasks and often work part time (20 hours a week or less). Employed women spend an average of 27.4 hours on paid labor and 23.8 hours on household tasks, compared to the 39.8 hours of paid labor and 11.6 hours on household tasks spent by working men (SCP, 2006). These numbers indicate that women tend to combine roles whereas men still primarily focus on their work role. We therefore expect, in line with the sex-role theory, that women's helping behavior at work will be more strongly influenced by family characteristics than men's.

Hypothesis 10: The relationship between family involvement and employee helping behavior is stronger for women than for men.

Method

Data and Procedure

The data were collected in 2007 from employees at 24 Dutch organizations using team-based work practices. Teams were defined as collections of individuals who are interdependent,

share responsibility for outcomes, and are viewed as an intact social entity (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). The Family and Work Outcomes Survey (ten Brummelhuis, van der Lippe, & Kluwer, 2007) was designed to study the effects of team members' family characteristics on individual work outcomes and team work outcomes. The 24 organizations covered four industrial sectors: (a) health care, such as a nursing home, (b) facility and support, such as a logistics center, (c) commercial service, such as a lease company, and (d) consultancy, such as an organizational consultancy office. Ten organizations had more than 100 employees, seven had between 50 and 100 employees, and seven had fewer than 50 employees.

Organizations were recruited from a professional network of organizations participating in our academic department's internship program. Of the 42 organizations involved in this program, 24 were interested in participating in the study. After consulting the HR staff of each organization, the researchers distributed questionnaires among the employees, accompanied by an introductory letter from the research coordinator with information about the study's aim and procedure. Employees could fill in the questionnaire at their discretion and return it to the research coordinator. The questionnaire covered the employees' family life, including time spent on family tasks and their perception of family life, as well as work characteristics (e.g., type of work tasks) and work outcomes (e.g., performance and helping behavior). Of the 1,527 questionnaires distributed, 520 were returned (34.1%), which is reasonable for samples in the Netherlands (varying from 25.0% to 45.0%), although it is rather low compared to international response rates (Kalmijn, Bernasco, & Weesie, 1999). The mean response rate of team members per team was 60%. The sample included more female (59%) than male employees because of the inclusion of six health care organizations, with only 4% male personnel. This distribution is, however, in line with national figures (SCP, 2006) as well as the percentages of male and female respondents found for the other sectors (58% male, 42% female). The distribution of the respondents' age was normal, with a mean of 38 years and ranging from 17 to 63 years. Lower educated employees (no education, primary school, or lower vocational education) were underrepresented (11%) compared to employees with secondary (43%) and tertiary (46%) educations. We included only employees from teams where at least 10% of the members completed the survey and who indicated that a minimum of 25% of their tasks required cooperation, resulting in a sample of 495 team members from 95 different teams.

To highlight the study's cultural context, we include some information below on the time allocation of Dutch employees. In the Netherlands, employees spend less time on paid work (33.6 hours) and household tasks (17.7 hours) than do employees in other European countries and the United States. In addition, a large percentage of women work less than 30 hours a week (61%). A particular work–family model has become common in the Netherlands, whereby the man works full-time and assists with family tasks and the woman works part-time and performs the largest share of the household work (SCP, 2006). The largest percentage of Dutch couples (37%) divide work and care tasks according to this "one-and-a-half" model, whereas only 28% can be categorized as adhering to the traditional breadwinner model.

Measures

Helping behavior. We operationalized helping behavior as the social, assisting, and cooperative behavior of the employee, directed toward team members. The four-item scale was

based on an altruism scale developed by Goodman and Svyantek (1999) to measure the attitude of employees toward helping team members. A principal component analysis extracted a single component, and the reliability of the scale was adequate (Cronbach's α = .71). The items were, "My colleagues can ask me for help if necessary," "My colleagues can count on my help if they have difficulties in their work," "I often help colleagues in need," and "If a colleague is absent I'm willing to take over the work." Answer categories ranged from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*), and the helping behavior scale was normally distributed, with a skewness of .378 (*SE* = .107) and a kurtosis of .520 (*SE* = .214).

Family structure. We asked whether the employee had a *partner*, resulting in a dummy variable for presence of a partner (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). The *number of children* living at home was measured as a continuous variable ranging from 0 to 7 children. The *age of the youngest child* was a proxy for the children's ages. Three dummy variables were used: youngest child younger than 4, age of the youngest child between 5 and 11, and age of the youngest child between 12 and 18 (0 = *youngest child not in age group*, 1 = *youngest child in age group*). Descriptive analyses showed that 46% of the respondents had no children, 18% had one child, 25% had two children, 9% had three children, and 2% had four or more children. The sample includes 13 single parents, having one child (n = 7) or two children (n = 6). None of these single parents had children younger than 4 years. There were 19 couples with two children younger than 4.

Family tasks. Family tasks were measured as the hours spent on household chores and care tasks. Respondents filled in how many hours a week they spent on buying groceries, tidying up, cleaning, cooking, keeping the household accounts, doing repairs (*household chores*), taking care of children, accompanying children, and caring for other people (*care tasks*).

Family support. We took into account spousal support by including the partner's assistance with family tasks and conflicts with the partner. Respondents were asked how many hours help they received from their partner, if present, with household chores (*partner's help with household chores*) and care tasks (*partner's help with care tasks*). The employees were asked about the *frequency of conflicts with their partner.* The four-item scale was developed by the Netherlands Kinship Panel study (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Knijn, Komter, Liefbroer, & Mulder, 2005) and included items such as, "In the previous month I had arguments with my partner" and "In the previous month my partner and I were not on speaking terms owing to a dispute" (Cronbach's α = .78; answer categories 1 = *never* to 5 = *often*). We also measured how many hours of help respondents received from others outside the household (friends, neighbors, and paid third parties) with household chores and care tasks. This resulted in the continuous variables *outsourcing household chores* and *outsourcing care tasks*.

Depleting and enriching mechanisms. We adapted validated scales measuring work-related energy drain and fulfillment to assess family-related energy drain and fulfillment. The family energy drain scale conceptually mirrored the subscale of Work-Related Emotional Exhaustion in the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey (MBI_GS; Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). The family fulfillment scale was based on job engagement, which

is the positive antithesis of the MBI_GS subscale of Disengagement (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The scale to measure family time pressure was developed for this study and consisted of items about time shortage in family life. A principal component analysis (exploratory factor analysis) confirmed the three-dimensional factor structure with no cross-loadings. The *energy drain* scale consisted of four items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$). Sample items were, "I feel mentally exhausted because of the tasks I perform at home" and "Performing tasks at home is a heavy burden for me." *Fulfillment* consisted of three items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$), such as, "Spending time with my family brightens me up" and "The relationship with my partner makes me happy." The items of the *time pressure* scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$) were, "I do not have enough time to do things with my children," "I never manage to spend enough time with my partner," and "Besides my job and family tasks, I have enough time for myself" (reverse coded). All scale items had answer categories ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Finally, we measured *skills in household chores* and *skills in care tasks* by asking the respondents how they rated their own skills, on a scale of 0 to 10, with respect to household chores (e.g., laundry, cooking) and care tasks (e.g., dressing, washing children).

Controls. We controlled for the organizational characteristic *business sector*, as the data were collected in various companies. We distinguished between the nonprofit (health care) and profit sector (facility, commercial, and consulting services), using a dummy variable coded 0 = *profit sector* and 1 = *nonprofit sector*. Furthermore, we took into account several commonly used predictors for helping behavior based on social network and solidarity theories (e.g., Hechter, 1987). The team characteristics work hours and team size were taken into account as a proxy for the opportunity to meet team members at work. *Work hours* were measured as the absolute number of work hours per week. *Team size* was measured as a continuous variable and varied in this sample from 2 to 19 team members. The employees reported the percentage of their work tasks requiring interaction with team members, resulting in a measure of the degree of cooperation needed in their job—a task characteristic. A higher interaction percentage corresponded with more *cooperative tasks*. Finally, the sociodemographics gender, age, and education were included. *Gender* was entered as a dummy variable (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*), *age* of the employee was measured as a continuous variable, and for *educational level* we used an 8-point scale ranging from 1 (*primary school or less*) to 8 (*university degree*).

Data Analyses

To test our hypothesized relationships, we performed structural equation modeling (SEM) using the Amos software package (Arbuckle, 1997). We chose to perform SEM modeling because this technique is particularly suitable for testing mediated relationships and models, including latent variables. We used the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) to examine the fit of the model to the data. We also utilized the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI). In general, models with fit indices greater than .90 and an RMSEA less than .08 indicate a close fit between the model and the data (Browne & Cudeck, 1989).

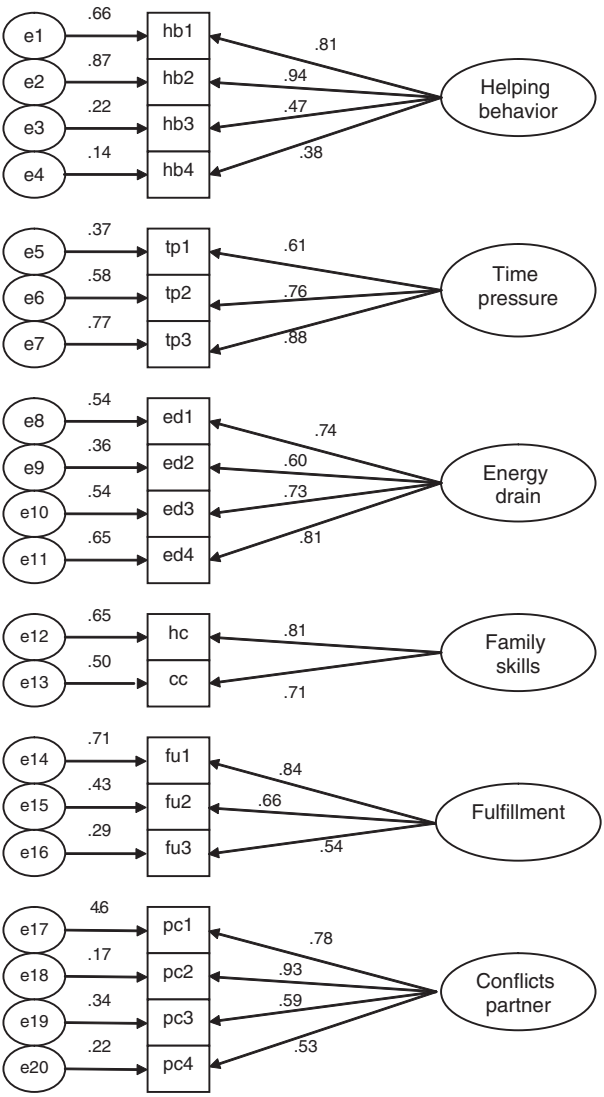
Our analysis of the mediation model consisted of four steps. First, to test the construct validity of the scale variables used in this study, we tested a measurement model with scale items tapping the six latent variables helping behavior, time pressure, energy drain, family skills, fulfillment, and spousal conflict. This measurement model showed a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(154) = 399.88$, RMSEA = .055, GFI = .93, CFI = .92, TLI = .90. All items had significant loadings on the intended factors (Figure 1). Second, we tested the hypothesized relationships of employee's family characteristics and employee helping behavior via the depleting and enriching mechanisms, including all control variables. We based the covariance relationships between the independent variables that we have included on the significant correlations (Table 1). Third, for each control variable we tested whether the relationships under study changed without the control variable. When the results were stable, the control variable was left out of the model. This strategy was chosen to create a more parsimonious model, after checking the confounding effects of the control variables.

Fourth, we used bootstrapping to test whether the significant pathways running between the predictors and the outcome variable via the mechanisms do in fact represent mediated relationships. Bootstrapping is a statistical resampling method that estimates the parameters of a model and their standard errors strictly from the sample (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). We extracted new samples (with replacement) from our sample 5,000 times and calculated all direct and indirect estimates of the hypothesized model. Bootstrapping is especially useful when testing a multiple mediator model (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In such a model, it is not always possible to find a significant direct relationship between the predictor (x) and the outcome variable (y), as two mediator variables (*m1* and *m2*) can have opposite effects, outweighing a net effect of x on y (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Furthermore, bootstrapping computes more accurate confidence intervals (CIs) of indirect effects ($x \rightarrow m \rightarrow y$) than the more commonly used methods, such as the causal steps strategy (Baron & Kenny, 1986), as it does not impose the assumption that the sampling distribution is normal (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This is especially relevant for indirect effects, as these have distributions that are skewed away from zero (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The null hypothesis, which states that x does not have an indirect effect on y via m, is rejected when the entire CI lies above or below zero. We examined the specific indirect effects of a predictor, *x1*, on y through a mediator, *m1*, by setting the path coefficients of the direct effect of *x1* on y to zero, as well as the pathways of *x1* to the other mediators (*m2*, *m3*, and *m4*; MacKinnon, 2008: 145). For more information on bootstrap analyses, see MacKinnon (2008).

In addition, we tested an alternative model, based on insights derived from the JDR model (Bakker et al., 2003), suggesting that more demanding family characteristics (e.g., care for young children) relate only to depleting processes and more rewarding family characteristics (e.g., having a partner) relate only to enriching processes. Following the method for alternative model testing described by Vandenberg and Grelle (2009), we tested whether this more parsimonious model resulted in a better model fit using a chi-square difference test.

Finally, we performed a multigroup analysis to test whether a model with the same parameters for men and women fit the data better than an unconstrained model allowing for differences between men and women. The unconstrained model, with relationships differing between men and women, fit the data significantly better, $\Delta\chi^2(65) = 121.33$, $p < .001$. For all significant path coefficients in the male and the female group, we used a χ^2 test to determine whether the pathways differed significantly between men and women.

Figure 1
Measurement Model of Latent Variables



Entries represent unstandardized variances and regression weights.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Model Variables

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Helping behavior	3.96	0.48											
2. Health care sector	0.30	0.46	−.04										
3. Work hours	34.36	11.50	.10*	−.62**									
4. Team size	7.42	3.79	−.09*	.22**	−.14**								
5. Cooperative tasks	66.86	29.71	.12**	.20**	−.07	.03							
6. Gender (female)	0.58	0.49	−.04	.50**	−.49**	.12**	.08						
7. Age	38.41	10.94	.07	.27**	−.12**	−.04	.14**	−.06					
8. Education	5.95	1.81	−.01	−.51**	.48**	.02	−.23**	−.20**	−.43**				
9. Partner	0.79	0.41	.07	−.01	.03	.08	.03	−.06	.22**	.00			
10. Number of children	0.85	1.12	−.05	.22**	−.21**	.05	.05	−.01	.30**	−.16**	.28**		
11. Youngest child younger than 4	0.11	0.31	−.11*	−.09*	.01	.07	−.05	−.07	−.10*	.15**	.18**	.29**	
12. Youngest child 4–11	0.13	0.34	.01	.11*	−.10*	.02	.01	−.01	.10*	−.08	.13**	.50**	−.14**
13. Youngest child older than 11	0.20	0.40	−.01	.28**	−.21**	−.01	.17**	.06	.43**	−.33**	.12**	.39**	−.18**
14. Household chores	11.36	8.01	−.02	.36**	−.36**	.10*	.19**	.18**	.28**	−.27**	.18**	.39**	.06
15. Care tasks	5.94	9.76	.00	.16**	−.21**	.12**	.06	.09*	.08	−.06	.18**	.47**	.45**
16. Conflicts partner	1.81	0.70	.04	−.14**	.13**	−.06	.00	−.07	−.01	.17**	.08	−.06	.03
17. Partner household chores	7.46	8.21	.09*	−.13**	.15**	−.02	.03	−.36**	.29**	−.04	.44**	.35**	.22**
18. Partner care tasks	5.20	10.48	−.03	−.08	.07	−.04	−.02	−.16**	.06	.06	.24**	.44**	.52**
19. Outsourcing household chores	1.04	3.01	.02	−.07	.05	.13**	−.09*	−.10*	−.06	.12**	.06	.04	.12**
	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
20. Outsourcing care tasks	2.95	8.06	−.11*	−.11*	.01	.02	−.06	−.04	−.06	.16**	.15**	.32**	.77**
21. Energy drain	1.98	0.74	−.10*	.12**	−.12**	.01	.07	.06	−.04	−.07	−.06	.05	−.03
22. Time pressure	2.48	0.66	−.08	−.01	.00	−.08	.00	.00	.00	.05	.15**	.20**	.12**
23. Fulfillment	4.00	0.69	.15**	−.05	.07	.03	−.05	.00	.03	.05	.32**	.11*	.13**
24. Family skills	7.22	1.16	.13**	.22**	−.17**	.12**	.07	.31**	.03	.01	.06	.02	−.05

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
12. Youngest child 4–11												
13. Youngest child older than 11	−.20**											
14. Household chores	.18**	.30**										
15. Care tasks	.37**	−.05	.39**									
16. Conflicts partner	−.05	−.06	−.01	−.03								
17. Partner household chores	.19**	.16**	.25**	.21**	.02							
18. Partner care tasks	.33**	−.09*	.18**	.66**	.03	.45**						
19. Outsourcing household chores	.06	−.09*	−.08	.02	−.01	.11*	.05					
20. Outsourcing care tasks	.05	−.14**	.05	.44**	.01	.19**	.42**	.14**				
21. Energy drain	.02	.08	.13**	.00	.11*	−.10*	−.01	−.04	−.03			
22. Time pressure	.07	.08	.13**	.14**	.15**	.04	.16**	−.04	.15**	.45**		
23. Fulfillment	.06	.01	.05	.14**	−.20**	.21**	.14**	.05	.13**	−.25**	−.17**	
24. Family skills	.00	.07	.27**	.08	.03	−.11*	−.07	.02	−.03	.01	−.09*	.10*

Note: $N = 495$. Entries represent correlation coefficients.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Results

Total Sample

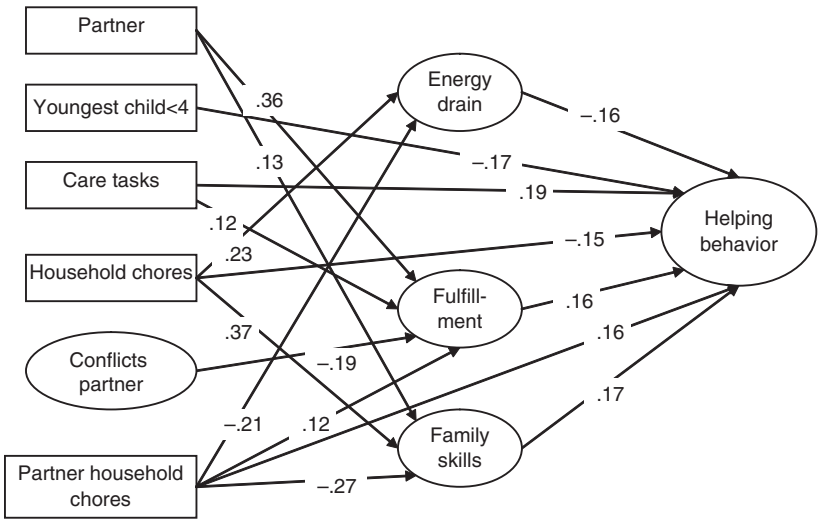
Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables measured. Team size, the presence of a child younger than 4 years, outsourcing of care tasks, and energy drain were negatively related to employees' helping behavior. Work hours, cooperative tasks, partner's household chores, family skills, and fulfillment were significantly and positively related to team members' helping behavior.

The analysis of the model linking all family characteristics to all mechanisms did not have an adequate model fit, $\chi^2(401) = 1015.49$, GFI = .89, RMSEA = .056, CFI = .89, TLI = .86. This was because of the nonsignificant pathway between the mediator time pressure and helping behavior. The model without this mediator variable showed a good fit, $\chi^2(324) = 684.10$, GFI = .92, RMSEA = .047, CFI = .93, TLI = .91. This model includes only the cooperative work tasks and work hours control variables, as the other controls did not affect the relationships under study. The alternative model, including separate enriching and depleting pathways, thus from the most demanding family variables (conflict partner, youngest child younger than 4, and household chores) to the depleting mechanisms only and from the most resourceful family variables (partner, number of children, and help with family tasks) to the enriching mechanisms only, significantly worsened the model fit, $\Delta\chi^2(15) = 72.00$, $p < .001$. We therefore continued to specify the indirect effects of the hypothesized model.

Figure 2 depicts the significant relationships between the family variables and helping behavior, mediated via the remaining depleting and enriching mechanisms (energy drain, fulfillment, skills). All mediated pathways were significant, as shown by the bootstrap of the specific indirect effects (Table 2). In line with Hypothesis 1, we found that having a partner was positively related to helping behavior through increased skills and fulfillment. We found neither a direct nor a mediated relationship between the number of children and helping behavior. Hypothesis 2, that the number of children increases helping behavior via enriching processes, was therefore not corroborated. Having children younger than 4 was related to less helping behavior (Table 2). However, this significant relationship was not mediated by any of the mechanisms. We thus found partial support for Hypothesis 3—the younger the children in the household, the less the employee displays helping behavior at work—although not mediated by the depleting mechanisms studied.

Care tasks had a direct, positive relationship with helping behavior. This relationship was partially mediated by fulfillment, supporting Hypothesis 4, which proposes that care tasks induce more enriching than depleting processes. Consistent with Hypothesis 5, household chores negatively affected helping behavior via the depleting process energy drain. In addition, the pathway between household chores and helping behavior through family skills was significant. Thus, household chores affected helping behavior via both an enriching (through family skills) and a depleting (through energy drain) mechanism. As expected, household chores deplete helping behavior more than they enrich it, as the bootstrapped total effects of household chores on helping behavior were negative (estimate = –.006, *SE* = .003, lower CI = –.012, higher CI = –.001, $p = .043$).

Figure 2
Total Sample: Relationships Between Family Involvement and Helping Behavior, Mediated by Enriching and Depleting Mechanisms



n = 495. Entries represent standardized regression weights. All path coefficients are significant at the $p < .05$ level. Note: all family variables were included in the analysis, as well as the control variables work hours and cooperative tasks. For the sake of clarity we only pictured the significant pathways of the family variables.

Table 2
Specific Indirect Pathways Using Bootstrapping

	Bootstrapping		BC 95% CI		
Indirect Effects	Estimate	*SE*	Lower	Upper	*p*
$x \rightarrow m \rightarrow y$					
Partner → fulfillment	.059	.028	.009	.111	.016
Partner → skills	.023	.016	.002	.061	.027
Care tasks → fulfillment	.007	.001	.003	.063	.020
Household chores → energy drain	.003	.001	.001	.055	.044
Household chores → skills	.004	.002	.001	.007	.005
Conflicts partner → fulfillment	–.016	.009	–.072	–.003	.019
Partner household chores → energy drain	–.016	.001	–.052	–.001	.045
Partner household chores → fulfillment	.009	.001	.003	.061	.011
Partner household chores → skills	–.028	.001	–.077	–.006	.016

Note: *N* = 495. BC = bias corrected; CI = confidence interval. Entries represent unstandardized coefficients.

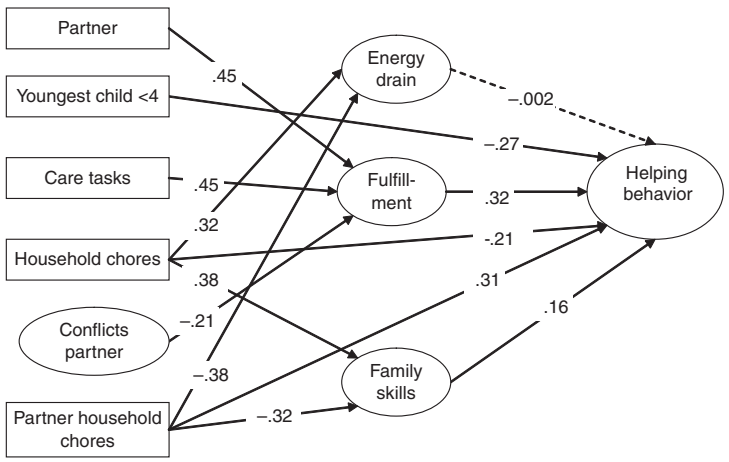
The partner's assistance with household chores had a direct, positive effect on the team member's helping behavior. This effect was partially mediated through diminished energy drain and increased fulfillment, supporting Hypothesis 6. Contrary to our expectation, the partner's help with household chores also diminished the employee's skills, reducing the helping behavior at work. The enriching effects of the partner's help on helping behavior were, however, stronger, shown by the positive total effects in the bootstrap (estimate = .008, *SE* = .003, lower CI = .001, higher CI = .014, $p = .023$). No significant pathway between the partner's assistance with care tasks and helping behavior was found. Hypothesis 7 was supported, as we found that conflict with the partner was negatively related to fulfillment, which in turn was associated with less helping behavior at work. We found no support for Hypothesis 8 and Hypothesis 9, as outsourcing of care tasks and outsourcing of household chores had no direct or indirect effect on helping team members.

Gender Differences

Figures 3 and 4 depict the relationships between family involvement and helping behavior among male and female employees. For both groups, the model showed an adequate fit to the data, men: $\chi^2(265) = 378.73$, GFI = .89, RMSEA = .045, CFI = .93, TLI = .91; women: $\chi^2(264) = 497.10$, GFI = .90, RMSEA = .053, CFI = .92, TLI = .89. Three of the relationships under study significantly differed between men and women. First, the partner's help with household chores had a direct positive and significant effect on men's helping behavior, whereas such a relationship was not found among women. Second, conflicts with the partner were associated with more helping behavior through increased skills among women, but not among men. An additional bootstrap analysis revealed that the indirect effect of partner conflict on helping behavior through increased skills was significant for women (estimate = .019, *SE* = .001, lower CI = .002, higher CI = .065, $p = .030$). The third significant gender difference was that men displayed less helping behavior at work through reduced skills when their partners performed more household chores, whereas this relationship was not present among women. These results do not support Hypothesis 10, predicting stronger relationships between family characteristics and helping behavior among women than among men. Only a few significant gender differences were found, including two stronger relationships between family and helping behavior for men.

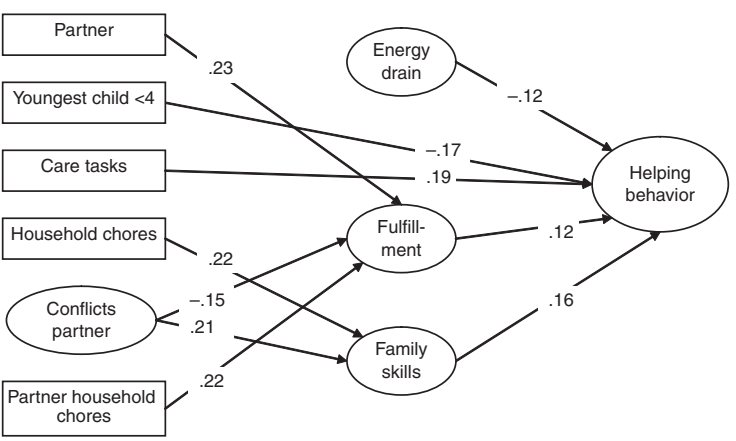
In addition, the separate models show several pathways that are specific for the male and female groups. Care tasks were positively related to helping behavior through fulfillment in the male group. For men, performing household chores had direct negative relationship with helping behavior and a positive relationship with energy drain. Also among men, the partner's help with household chores was positively related to helping behavior and negatively related to energy drain. We note however that energy drain had no significant relationship with helping behavior in the male group. Care tasks had a direct positive relationship with helping behavior for women. The partner's help with household chores was positively associated with helping behavior via increased fulfillment among women.

Figure 3
Men: Relationships Between Family Involvement and Helping Behavior, Mediated by Enriching and Depleting Mechanisms



n = 210. Entries represent standardized regression weights. All path coefficients are significant at the $p < .05$ level, except for the dotted line (nonsignificant).

Figure 4
Women: Relationships Between Family Involvement and Helping Behavior, Mediated by Enriching and Depleting Mechanisms



n = 285. Entries represent standardized regression weights. All path coefficients are significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to expand our knowledge of helping behavior at work in two ways. First, we explored to what extent family involvement enriches or conflicts with team members' helping behavior, whereby we explicitly examined the mechanisms through which family characteristics are related to helping behavior. We found multiple positive relationships between family involvement and helping behavior in teams. More specifically, our results indicated that performing care tasks increased fulfillment, resulting in more helping behavior toward team members. Having a partner also had enriching effects on helping behavior, via increased fulfillment and skills. In particular, having a supportive partner—one who assists with household chores and with whom conflicts are infrequent—contributed to helping behavior at work, via increased fulfillment and reduced energy drain. In addition, performing household chores enabled team members to develop skills that they used to improve their helping behavior at work. These results are in line with previous studies reporting that employees can learn useful skills, such as interpersonal skills and patience, and derive motivation and energy from their partner and children (Ruderman et al., 2002). The beneficial effects of family involvement on helping behavior in teams support the enrichment approach that posits that employees can derive resources from family life that facilitate work outcomes. Our study specifies that team members can derive fulfillment and skills from their family life that facilitate helping behavior in the team.

Beside these enriching effects, we also found support for the conflict approach, which states that family involvement can decrease work outcomes owing to time pressure and energy drain. Beside improving family skills, performing household chores was also associated with more energy drain, decreasing helping behavior. Having young children in the household appeared to be harmful for team members' helping behavior. We could not, however, explain this relationship by referring to one of the depleting mechanisms (energy drain or time pressure). Apparently, other mechanisms are responsible for the depleting effect of young children on helping behavior at work. Speculating on this finding, we suggest that caring for young children may be tougher than caring for older children because the former is more physically demanding and immediate (feeding during the night, changing diapers). Our measurement of time pressure or energy drain may not have reflected the *physical* burden or sleep deficit adequately, as it focused on the *emotional* burden. Furthermore, previous research has reported that employees with newborns become more involved in the lives of their family members, are more often absent, and contribute less to the collegial atmosphere at work (Erickson et al., 2000; Knoester & Eggebeen, 2006; ten Brummelhuis, Haar, & van der Lippe, in press). Similarly, employees with young children may focus more on family life and reduce social time with team members. This could then explain our finding that team members with young children showed less helping behavior at work.

Contrary to our expectations, care tasks did not affect helping behavior through increased family skills, whereas this relationship was found for household chores. Possibly, performing household chores results in general skills such as planning, accuracy, and carefulness, which are also useful for managing relationships at work (Ruderman et al., 2002). The skills measured in care tasks included those specifically applied in the family domain, such as washing and dressing children. These skills presumably do not reflect interpersonal skills,

such as understanding and motivating others, which Ruderman et al. (2002) found to enhance managerial women's professional roles.

Our second aim was to explore gender differences in the relationship between family involvement and helping behavior. We found only a few significant gender differences, and family had at least as many significant effects on helping behavior among men as among women. Our results therefore do not convincingly support the sex-role theory, which suggests that the family–work boundary is more permeable for women than for men. Nevertheless, the results for men and women as separate groups reveal some striking results. Performing household chores induced depleting processes among men, shown by more energy drain and less helping behavior at work. Not surprisingly, then, the partner's help with household chores was particularly beneficial for men, decreasing energy drain and increasing helping behavior. There was also a backlash among men with partners who performed more household chores; these men had weaker family skills, which negatively affected their helpfulness at work. Among women, the partner's assistance with household chores was related to more helping behavior, but via fulfillment. These findings suggest that men perceive household chores as burdensome, draining their resources. The energy drain is prevented when their partner performs these tasks. Household tasks do not lead to energy drain among women, but they appreciate having help from their partners, and this increases their fulfillment, as it implies a more equal division of family tasks (Lavee & Katz, 2002).

Both men and women showed more helping behavior when they performed more care tasks, but this effect could be ascribed to increased fulfillment only in the male group. It is possible that other mechanisms are at work for women. For example, norms concerning altruistic behavior may be particularly prevalent among women who are involved in care tasks, explaining abundant helping behavior in the family and the work domain (ten Brummelhuis et al., in press). A final remarkable finding was that conflicts with the partner increased skills among female team members and in turn contributed to helping behavior at work. It is possible that spousal conflict contributes to skills, such as problem solving and open communication, provided that partners use a constructive conflict style (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Kluwer & Johnson, 2007). Alternatively, women with excellent family skills may make higher demands of their partner's performance of household tasks, fostering conflicts between partners.

All in all, the separate gender analyses do not entirely match the traditional breadwinner model assumed by the sex-role theory, as both men and women experience enrichment from participating in care tasks as well as depletion from care for children younger than 4 years. Still, household chores in particular drain male's resources, whereas women appreciate their partner's help with such tasks. This accurately describes the "one-and-a-half" work–family model that the Netherlands is famous for: Although men are primarily occupied with work tasks and assist at home, women divide their time and energy more evenly between work and family tasks.

Limitations, Future Research, and Implications

This study was subject to a number of limitations. First, the data were collected at a single point in time, meaning that no firm conclusions can be drawn regarding the causality of the

relationships under study. Second, our design does not exclude the possibility that a latent construct is responsible for variance in both the predictors and the dependent variable. For example, employees with more altruistic personalities may be more likely to perform many child care tasks and to be helpful at work. Third, we used a measure for family time pressure that has not been validated by previous research. Our measure of time pressure covered the employee's lack of time *at home*. This could explain why we could not find a significant relationship with helping behavior *at work*. More research is needed to confirm this result, using a refined and validated measure of time pressure. Similarly, our measure of family skills was a limitation, as it consisted of two items, rating general skills in household chores and care tasks. Fourth, the use of self-reports may have led to bias because of common method variance and decreased internal consistency reliability for the helping behavior measure. Future studies could improve the measurement of helping behavior by means of team member or supervisor assessments (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Fifth, our study design resulted in a selective sample of organizations in which highly educated employees working in the service sector were overrepresented. Furthermore, the response rate of employees was relatively low. Additional research should examine whether our findings can be generalized to employees in other jobs and from other backgrounds. Finally, the model we tested does not include team-level variables. It is imaginable that the team context, such as a bad atmosphere at work or low supervisor support, also influences employee helping behavior. A strength of our study is the relatively large number of team members, enabling us to study helping behavior in teams, for which such behavior is particularly important. Furthermore, we have information on employees from multiple organizations representing a wide range of industries, resolving issues associated with single-firm or industry studies.

Our results provide several leads for future research. The role of individual differences in helping behavior could be examined more thoroughly. Grzywacz and Marks (2000) showed that neuroticism induced more negative family–work spillover, whereas more extravert personalities had higher positive family–work spillover. Future studies are needed to confirm whether personality characteristics similarly affect the relationship between family characteristics and helping behavior at work. Our results revealed that some family characteristics (e.g., family tasks) directly affected helping behavior, indicating that only part of these effects could be ascribed to the mechanisms of fulfillment, skills, and energy drain. More research is needed to unravel other possible mechanisms that explain the effect of family on helping behavior, such as a lack of time to fulfill dual roles or norms concerning altruistic behavior. More specific measures of family skills (e.g., patience, listening to others, scheduling) could also foster a better understanding of family–work enrichment. Furthermore, we studied helping behavior in a team-based setting. Future studies should point out whether our results can be generalized to various work settings, focusing on helping behavior toward colleagues in general. Researchers could also elaborate on our study by investigating the relationship between family involvement and work outcomes at the team level. For example, studies could address whether the family characteristics of team members affect overall cooperation within the team and whether the composition of team members, based on family characteristics, influences team effectiveness. Finally, cross-country data are needed to check whether gender differences in the family–work linkage are similar in other cultural settings.

This study provides useful insights for managerial practice. The results indicate that having a family can contribute to helping behavior because family involvement generates additional energy and skills. Employees seeking a work–family balance might consider that investing in relationships at home can produce energy that can be invested in work. In addition, the results can be helpful to managers when they are assembling work groups. Knowing that helping behavior is enhanced when team members have significant care tasks but reduced when they have young children, it might be sensible to assemble mixed groups of employees with no children, young children, and older children. Alternatively, employees who have young children can be given additional support to facilitate helping behavior among team members.

Conclusion

We concretized how family life can conflict with but also enrich helping behavior in teams. The key contribution of our study is that we unraveled the mechanisms through which family characteristics affect helping behavior in teams. Numerous enriching effects of family involvement were found, supporting the more recent perspective on the work–family linkage that family life furnishes resources that are useful for work (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Moreover, our results indicate that enriching and depleting processes can coexist and can even be elicited by a single family factor. Performing household chores, for example, costs energy but also produces useful skills, thereby negatively and positively affecting helping behavior. Both the conflict approach and the enrichment approach seem to explain a part of the family–work linkage; although family characteristics can consume energy, family also supplies additional resources such as fulfillment and skills. We conclude that family–work enrichment is a widespread process that is highly relevant in explaining how employees' family lives influence their helping behavior. We therefore encourage organizational research to include the family domain when explaining work outcomes and to examine the possible benefits of combining work and family.

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